

Sturm, S.J., who took most seriously his title and high estate: Prefect of Discipline.

Father John was built like a fireplug. And although an equal opportunity disciplinarian, he made Timmy Russert his favorite charge almost from the minute he first encountered the personable Irish youngster from South Buffalo with the bright eyes and easy smile. That was back in the 60's and they have been friends ever since. Canisius has turned out federal judges named Crotty and Arcara, political power brokers like Joe Crangle, big car dealers, stellar athletes including a few Holy Cross and Notre Dame quarterbacks, and doctors and lawyers of great renown. The Jesuits spotted Russert's beguiling potential early on. Even then they knew.

He would go back to Buffalo over the years to see his father and during summers better than this one Tim Russert would sit at Cole's bar in the Elmwood section to talk sports over a beer and a "beef on a weck," Buffalo's legendary version of roast beef, a steamship round of which was personally carved by the bartender and then piled on a Kimmelweck roll covered with salt to be dipped in Heinz Ketchup. The music in the air on those nights was provided by ancient tapes of Fred Klestine's old radio programs from the 50's and 60's which survive to this day at Cole's.

They would order another Simon Pure beer or a Carling's ale and talk about the rich girls who went to "The Mount," a boarding school, and about Johnny Barnes, the old Canisius High football coach and sometimes about Cornelius MacGillicuddy, a favorite teacher who owned a bar in the Parkside section over near Delaware Park.

He never lost touch with the Jesuits. And just a few weeks ago, Father Sturm, now in his 90's, sent out invitations to a scholarship luncheon in his own honor with the obligatory picture of his protégé Tim Russert on the cover.

Before his dazzling work on television which made him famous, Tim labored in the service of the two brightest minds in public life during our time: Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the estimable Mario M. Cuomo.

Someone said yesterday on television: "He wasn't exactly a pretty boy." With his cheeks and jowls, Russert was the complete antithesis of all the hyper, vacuous "talking heads" and all the bimboes—male as well as female—who sit each day in those anchor chairs praying the teleprompter doesn't fail lest they be forced to utter something more profound than "absolutely!"

Only Chris Matthews was his equal in terms of depth and intelligence. And maybe Jon Meacham or Lawrence O'Donnell or Peggy Noonan. George Stephanopoulos can hold his own in front of a camera (and in front of George Will). And classy Deborah Norville has a brain. While among the youngsters coming up—William "Billy" Bush and Chris Cuomo are bursting with intelligence and promise. Ditto Bill Geist's kid Willy. And David Gregory and Tucker Carlson are easy to take. Barbara Walters and Diane Sawyer are class acts in any season.

We've always liked Bob Scheiffer and Judy Woodruff. And how can you not like Mike Barnicle and Joe Scarborough (but not the girl with him, the one with the famous father, who talks over everybody). And I hope Larry King, like Paul Harvey on the radio, goes on forever. Plus I still take pleasure in our infrequent sightings of Rather and Brokaw.

Russert, however, operated on a level far beyond most of them. And he didn't need high tech production values or fancy overhead lighting in an ultra-modern studio to enhance and amplify his unique genius. He was to network news what Mario Cuomo is to public discourse. And as the great Cuomo

himself reminded us, "Tim never forgot where he came from and he never let us forget it either . . . and we loved him for it."

He would summer on Nantucket and go to parties at Sally Quinn's in Washington. But Russert never denied his roots in Buffalo. There was a realness about him, a genuineness, on and off the air.

A few summers ago, Russert was the main speaker at an important conference of the New York State Broadcasters Association up at Bolton Landing on Lake George. After his talk he was persuaded by our mutual friend Joe Reilly, the head of the broadcasters in the Empire State, to linger and give out the Association's Awards for Excellence . . . even as an NBC plane waited on the tarmac at the nearby Glens Falls airport to rush him back to Washington.

There were many awards and citations in every category. But Russert was his usual generous self and so he stayed late into the night as the awards presentations wore on. And when it was announced that your own WVOX had won the designation for "Best Editorials in New York State" (which we clearly did not deserve), Russert arched his eyebrows and the Irish eyes twinkled as my son David and I advanced to the front of the ballroom to receive our award.

As we posed for the cameras and the flash-bulbs popped, Tim asked, sotto voce, "How's Mario? . . . how's Nancy? . . . how are the kids? . . . how's the station?" And now as my mind drifts back on this weekend after he died, I wonder if I remembered to inquire about his own welfare? I hope so, but I doubt it, given that heady moment in the spot-lights. But he remembered.

Russert then thoughtfully pulled away my son David for a shot with just the two of them . . . and said, again on the QT, while still smiling for the cameras, "How the hell did your old man win this damn thing . . . it must have been by sheer guile! Or did Cuomo write it for him?" As the two of them cracked up with laughter, no one in the audience of more than 500 had a clue what they were chuckling about.

James O'Shea, who owns The West Street Grill, a high class saloon in Litchfield, Connecticut (he much prefers the designation "fine dining establishment") called while I was thinking about all this. According to O'Shea, "Russert possessed the genius of the Irish. Just say he was Irish. People will know what that means. He was Irish!" As O'Shea provides libation and sustenance for the likes of Philip Roth, Rex Reed, Jim Hoge, Bill vandenHeuvel, Rose Styron, George Clooney, Peter Duchin and Brooke Hayward . . . I will bow to his wisdom. Russert did indeed have the genius of the Irish.

Nancy and I would see him around town of an evening, when he would come up from Washington to do some business at the NBC Universal mother ship at Rockefeller Center or if one of us had to emcee a dinner. And no matter how late the hour or how tired and rumpled he appeared, it was always the same: "How are the kids? . . . how are the stations doing? . . . how's the gov?"

NBC delayed the news of his passing and actually got scooped by the New York Post and the Times until someone from their shop was retrieved to go and inform his wife Maureen Orth, their son Luke, and his beloved father Big Russ. But who, I wonder, had to knock on the door of the old priest in the Jesuit retirement house on Washington Street up in Buffalo to tell Father John Sturm, S.J. Timmy Russert was gone?

I always thought Russert would have made a wonderful politician himself or a great teacher. Or even a priest. And with his sudden, untimely departure at 58, he probably taught us one more lesson learned from the old Jesuits: "You know not the hour . . . or the moment."

The newsman-journalist known as Tim Russert has been mourned by millions and eulogized in all the journals and periodicals in the land. But the most exquisite tribute, and probably the one he would have liked the most came from Michelle Spuck, a waitress at Bantam Pizza in the Litchfield hills, who told a customer over the weekend, "I'm so sad about this . . . I never met him . . . but I knew him."

He died in front of a microphone.  
This is Bill O'Shaughnessy.

## RECOGNIZING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF TOMMIE ANN GIBNEY

### HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 8, 2008*

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues the important accomplishments of Tommie Ann Gibney. Ms. Gibney is a shining example of a woman who tries hard and succeeds brilliantly. She does it all. She is a professional, a distinguished attorney, friend of many, wife, mother, and in June of this year Ms. Gibney will add president. She will be one of only three women to ever hold the prestigious position as president of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America/New Jersey, an organization of over 2100 attorneys, paralegals, law clerks and law school graduates who protect New Jersey families by advocating for safer products and workplaces, a cleaner environment, and quality health care.

Ms. Gibney attended Seton Hall University for her undergraduate, graduate, and law school degrees. As an associate at Andres and Berger in Haddonfield, New Jersey, Ms. Gibney fights tirelessly for victims of nursing home abuse and neglect. She volunteers her services and vast legal knowledge to Trial Lawyers Care, 9–11 Legal Assistance, and to the Hyacinth Aids Foundation. She is a role model for all law professionals both in and outside of the courtroom. My congratulations to Tommie Ann Gibney and her family.

## SUNSET MEMORIAL

### HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 8, 2008*

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I stand once again before this House with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is July 8, 2008 in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand. That's just today, Madam Speaker. That's more than the number of innocent lives lost on September 11 in this country, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,951 days since the tragedy called Roe v. Wade was first handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of its own children. Some of them, Madam Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over the vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.